AMAZING CINEMA

Number 2 June $2.50

SPECIAL BEHIND THE SCENES PREVIEW...

FIEND

Don Leifert as the Fiend

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of AMAZING CINEMA. As we go into our *fourth* issue (#3 is ready for press, and #4 is being designed as I write this!), it's becoming very apparent to all of us that we're going to have to *expand* the magazine as soon as it's economically feasible. By "expand" I mean *number of pages.* The reason is simple: there is so much material on hand, or being developed, that a 32-page magazine just will *not* suffice in the coming months! Even with 12 issues a year (that's 384 pages annually), we're going to be "cramped" for space for all the fantastic articles coming up. So keep in mind that we will do everything in our power to constantly enlarge and improve the magazine—and at no extra cost to you (which is a pretty good pitch for you to subscribe, if you haven't already! A coupon can be found elsewhere in this issue).

A bit of an apology is due here: in issue #1, we said we would be running *Reader Viewpoint* this time. However, we didn't stop to consider that *this* issue would be into typesetting and on the presses before you even received issue #1, so obviously, there was no time to receive your letters. We certainly hope to begin *Reader Viewpoint* in issue #3, and we hope you'll take the opportunity to "sound off" on any film/special effects topic you wish. Good, bad, or indifferent, it's your chance to "let off steam."

Speaking of *your* participation, we would like to ask you to be a part of our *Reader Survey* on page 31. It will cost you an 18¢ stamp, but it's vital for us to receive your input. You've seen these sorts of surveys before, but honestly, they *do* help us get an idea of the types of stories and articles you'd like to see. We urge you to take part in the survey, and we thank you!

As you know by now, our cover story this time is about our newest feature film, *Fiend.* Some of you may be wondering why I didn't do the reporting on my own film, as I have done in the past. Well, there are several reasons (time is one of them), but the most important is that Bill George, the author of the *Fiend* story, is a definite "blood & guts" fan, and *Fiend* is *not* a blood & guts movie. Yet, Bill saw the qualities that we tried to achieve in the film, and he has been incensed that many horror "bloodbaths" have not only been released lately, but grossed millions of dollars —while *Fiend* struggles to make a *deal.* I could easily have written a wonderful, sugar-coated account of the film, but I felt that Bill's viewpoint would be a lot more objective. I think it is, and it raises a question that *I* would like to hear some reactions to: would *you* rather pay $4.00 to see a plotless, blood & guts romp, or a fantasy-horror with well defined characters and storyline?

Your answers could possibly determine the fate of *Fiend.*

— Don Dohler

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Avco Embassy Pictures Fred Gibmeyer Barbara Griffith Paramount Pictures Corp 20th Century Fox Inc Universal Pictures Co Inc
SCANNED BY CARBUNKLE FOR DCP

AMAZING CINEMA

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PRODUCTION SLATE

News of films in production or recently completed. Whether you're an amateur, independent, or professional studio, we'd like to list your current science fiction, horror, and fantasy productions on these pages! Please send all pertinent details—cast, producer, director, effects personnel, title, plotline—as well as publicity photos, to:

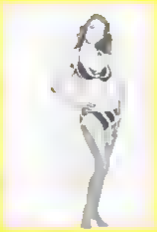
AMAZING CINEMA
Production Slate
12 Moray Court
Baltimore, MD 21236

Beauty and The Nightbeast

Cinema Enterprises is in the midst of an extensive search for talent for *Nightbeast*, an effects-filled SF/horror feature to be filmed this summer.

So far, two roles have been filled for sure: the Nightbeast itself (seen below, left) and one of the featured female roles, to be played by pretty Eleanor Herman (below, right).

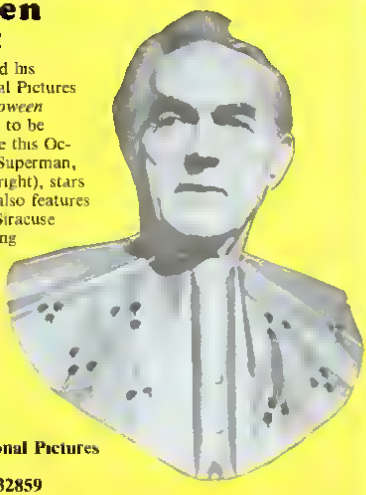
More details on *Nightbeast* will unfold over the next few months.



© Cinema Enterprises 1981

Halloween Planet

Fred Olen Ray and his Firebird International Pictures are completing *Halloween Planet*, a TV special to be shown at goblin time this October. The original Superman, Kirk Alyn (seen at right), stars in the show, which also features Joy Gall and John Siracuse. Rod Cavin is directing.



Halloween planet features many special visual effects, including opticals by Bart Mixon, Robert Dietschle, and Ricardo Gonzoles.

For more info:

Firebird International Pictures
P.O. Box 13458
Orlando, Florida 32859

Pang

"Pang (seen below in a pre-production painting) is the original concept of Carl Paolino. Carl is using Pang in a short comedy, which will be the pilot for a feature.

Evolution: Complete

A young scientist, experimenting with the theory of evolution, discovers a serum that, if injected into the bloodstream, will accelerate the whole evolutionary cycle. Using himself as a subject, the scientist begins the experiment, only to find that the metamorphosis is *reversing*.

Special make-up and effects are being handled by James Burke, who is pictured at right in one of his own make-ups, which depicts one of the final stages of the regressing evolution process.

BFX Productions
46 Seminole Rd.
Acton, MA 01720

PRODUCTION SLATE

Knightriders

Knightriders is the newest film entry from George A. Romero, the famed independent director of *Night Of The Living Dead* and its contemporary sequel, *Dawn Of The Dead* (which, to date, has grossed 55 million worldwide). Romero also directed two "sleepers" in the '70's: *The Crazies* and *Martin*, which both enjoyed critical acclaim, if not boxoffice success.

Knightriders is not exactly a fantasy film, but it is about a troupe of people who enjoy a fantasy-like existence. As members of a traveling Renaissance Fair, they trek from town to town—much like a carnival—and promote their big event: a full Medieval jousting tournament, with the combatants in suits of armor, wielding lances, battleaxes, maces, and broadswords. The departure from the Medieval spectacle is intriguing—the troupe rides motorcycles, not horses.

Ed Harris, Gary Lahti, Tom Savini, Amy Ingersoll, and Patricia Tallman star in the film, which is now being readied for release. Richard P. Rubinstein produced, and Michael Gornick headed the photography (as he did in *Dawn Of The Dead*). *Knightriders* is being released by Richard C. Hassanein's United Film Distribution Company, the distributor who had the guts and foresight to release *Dawn Of The Dead* uncut and unrated.

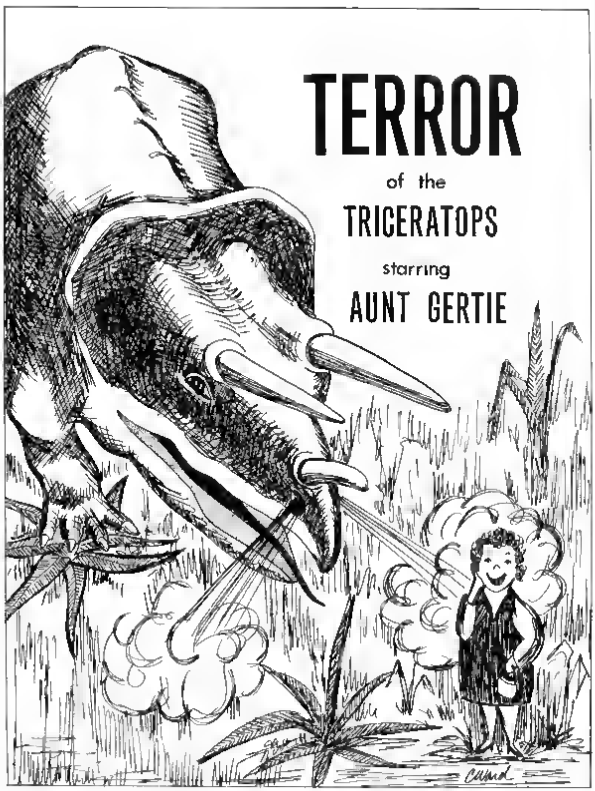
Scenes from *Knightriders*. Below, George Romero directs Ed Harris and Amy Ingersoll. Right, top: Michael Gornick gets a hand held shot while two "knights" do battle. Right, middle: An action scene, as a knight is knocked from his motorcycle. Right: Tom Savini, master make-up artist on Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead*, portrays Morgan, the black knight.

THE TRICERATOPS VS AUNT GERTIE

The terrific dinosaur effects lose to Aunt Gertie's unrealistic acting...

A Guide To Better Acting For Novice Performers

Article by **Don Leifert**
Art by Connie Ward



Aspiring filmmakers study the art of editing, special effects, and photography with a dedication that borders on obsession. These same young hopefuls spend countless hours in makeshift studio attics and basements painstakingly shooting their amateur efforts from carefully constructed storyboards. They devour literature on the subject of moviemaking and study professional film, just as serious biology students study one celled creatures under microscopes. In short, amateur filmmakers are an amazingly dedicated breed of artist.

Although many of these talented amateurs move on to the greener pastures of a professional career in the industry as editors, special effects technicians, and directors, most of them confine their products to the backyard (as opposed to the backlot) and the basement (as opposed to the studio storage locker). Willing to deal with seemingly insurmountable problems during their shooting schedules, these craftsmen manage to create films ranging from crude, but interesting, super-8 efforts to highly imaginative mini-masterpieces that serve as showcases for the filmmaker's professional potential. At its best, however, an amateur film still looks like....well, an amateur film.

Despite the obvious problem of budget limitations, what is it that makes the amateur movie less satisfying (artistically) than those polished products emerging from the studios of New York and Hollywood? It is, quite simply, the bad acting that tends to dominate even the best amateur movies. While most amateur moviemakers spare no expense (and are usually willing to lose many hours of sleep) in creating laser beam effects or constructing ball-and socket miniatures for their films, they thing nothing of rushing Aunt Gertie over on a weekday evening for a hurried 30 minutes of shooting. Aunt Gertie, you see, is the family actress. She tells the best

jokes at parties, sings a mean Auld Lang Syne when she's had a few, and recites Robert Frost poetry flawlessly. What more could a young director hope for?

Imagine that the filmmaker is shooting a production titled *Terror of the Triceratops*. He has recruited Aunt Gertie to play Shana, the aging queen of the Nahaba Tribe. The direction probably goes something like this:

Director: Just remember to look in this direction, Aunt Gertie. You're supposed to be looking at a big dinosaur. Look scared. You're supposed to be really frightened.

Gertie: Like this?

Director: That's pretty good, but try to look less like you're smiling. You're supposed to be really frightened.

Months later, the director invites some close friends over to be the first to screen his new stop motion movie, *Terror of the Triceratops*. As the credits begin to roll, the audience oohs and aahs at the star busts that precede the names of the actors. The colors in the film stock are vivid, and the photography is sharp and well-composed. The audience is impressed. Enter an incredibly realistic Triceratops. The ugly brute is munching on the leg of some ancient creature. The stop-motion animation, which includes very fluid breathing effects, is excellent. The audience is captivated. Enter Aunt Gertie wearing an antediluvian tutu and a very wide grin. Quick shot of the Triceratops charging, smoke steaming from its flared nostrils. Cut to Aunt Gertie, with an even *wider* grin. Triceratops charges Gertie. Gertie grins. CHARGE! There is a loud noise which is followed by grey smoke. As the smoke clears, Aunt Gertie sits around a bonfire and shares the remaining meat from her kill with the rest of the Nahaba tribe. While the end credits roll, the director listens carefully to the various comments that are beginning to fill the room.

Steve: Good effects, but that woman was terrible. She looked like she was smiling at the camera.

Bill: I think it added a lot to the film. It was supposed to be a comedy. Wasn't it?

Stan: No. It was supposed to be serious. Problem was, she looked like she was smiling at someone across a dining room table. The woman was supposed to be engaged in mortal combat with a two-ton horned thing.

The director in this case probably finds it difficult to believe that his friends are discounting his brilliant stop-motion effects in favor of discussing Aunt Gertie's potential as an actress. Somehow bad acting always has the hypnotic ability to captivate an audience's attention and detract from a film's merits. In the case of *Terror of the Triceratops*, bad acting proved fatal.

The above incident is descriptive of a situation that many amateur filmmakers share. It is not uncommon for the inexperienced director to channel 99% of his energy into the technical aspects of his production. As a result, very little attention is paid to the quality of acting in the movie.

How, then, can an amateur who is working with a minimal budget avoid this common pitfall? Assuming that the actors available for such work are of an amateur status, how can the director obtain good performances from his cast?

Step one (and perhaps the most important step) is casting. Prior to casting his film, the director should think about each of the characters in his screenplay. He should then determine which qualities best define each of those characters. For instance, Han Solo of *Star Wars* is defined by his egotism and his ability to remain cool under stressful conditions. George Lucas found an actor (Harrison Ford) capable of projecting these qualities on the screen. During tryouts, the director *must* know what qualities he's looking for in the actors and actresses who audition.

Harrison Ford was perfectly cast as Han Solo

An invaluable source for locating talented actors who will work free is the local college or university. If the filmmaker is lucky enough to live near one or more of these institutions, he should type a letter explaining his project. He should then post his letter, which should include his phone number and/or mailing address, on the theatre department's bulletin board. Any actors or actresses who are interested in auditioning should be instructed to contact the director. Many theatre arts students are willing to tackle such assignments merely to gain experience. Local high schools can also serve as a good training ground for talent. In this case, the director should contact the drama teacher, who will probably be more than willing to assist him by recruiting students.

Both methods of recruitment, however, can lead to problems. If, for instance, a film has a cast of 11 high school students, teenagers will be playing all the roles. This type of casting will immediately give the film an amateur quality. When seventeen-year-old performers are cast as parents (of other seventeen-year-old performers), policemen, mad scientists, starship captains, sheriffs, superheros, werewolves, vampires, etc., the filmmaker is creating an unrealistic world that will strike the viewer as false. When is the last time an entire community of professionals consisted soley of people below the age of twenty? Consequently, it is essential that the director cast his college and high school actors in roles that correspond to their own age group.

Let's assume that our director is working on his latest horror film, *The Witch's Secret*. He has a cast of nine: five male roles and four female roles. Since six of the roles require young performers, he has

cast them through his former high school. There are three important roles left: the witch (an unsightly creature who serves as the villain in the picture), Doctor Jameson (a forty-three-year-old professional who battles the witch in a classic confrontation between good and evil), and Dolores Jameson (an attractive woman in her late thirties, assistant to her husband). The role of the witch could be handled by a competent college performer who is adept at playing character roles under heavy make-up. Since the actress playing the role will be required to alter her voice and appearance drastically, her actual age will not be apparent to the viewer, consequently, a young performer could be used here.

This leaves the director with major problems. Where can he find two older performers who (a) can devote time to rehearsals and shooting schedules (b) are physically suited to the roles (c) can act. Not an easy task. The easiest and most common solution to this problem is to cast a friend or relative in such roles. This should be avoided unless the friend or relative has an acting background. Inexperienced performers rarely turn in believable performances. That is not to say, however, that there won't be situations in which a person with no background in performing is just perfect for a specific role. If this is the case, the director may choose to gamble on a rookie.

A better alternative, however, is to locate the management from amateur theatre groups. Most communities have local drama clubs that produce plays. The actors in such companies usually hold full-time jobs in other fields and enjoy acting recreationally on weekends. As in the case of many college theatre majors, some of these performers would welcome the opportunity to gain more experience by acting in a film. If the director is fortunate enough to locate an actor from such a group, he must remember to work around the actor's schedule, or, as is often the case, the actor will abandon the project because of the demands made on his time.

If the director is confident that he has cast his film well, he is ready to begin step two, the rehearsal process. Prior to rehearsing scenes with individual actors and actresses, it is best to assemble the entire cast for a script read-through. This will enable the performers to get a sense of the overall production and to see how their scenes contribute to the film as a whole. Directors who eliminate this step, and assume that each cast member will read the entire shooting script carefully, are mistaken.

Above: Although he appears comfortable with his prop gun, Greg Dohler would not be convincing as a 14-year-old starship captain.

If time allows, the director should rehearse individual scenes a few days before shooting actual takes. Due to the budget limitations, most amateur moviemakers shoot on a ratio (the average number of times a scene is shot before the director obtains an acceptable take) of 1-to-1 or 2-to-1. This leaves little or no room for error once the camera starts rolling. Scenes that haven't been rehearsed days in advance of the shooting schedule deny the actor the opportunity to consider ways in which his scenes could be improved. Rehearsing scenes in advance gives the director time to deal with potential problems before shooting begins.

Props, for instance, can be very troublesome. Visualize a scene in which an actor is required to handle a futuristic weapon, an intricately designed control panel, and a 21st Century communications device. It is essential that such scenes are rehearsed until the actor is comfortable handling each of the various props. The actor *must* convince his audience that he is completely familiar with the objects that surround him. An actor who fumbles with his props is equivalent to the dancer who looks at his feet.

The most difficult task that faces the director is in eliciting credible performances from an inexperienced cast. How, for instance, should a director explain to an actor who is going over the top (hamming it up) that he should tone down his performance? On the other hand, how does a director draw an emotional scene from a wooden (highly unemotional) performer? A description of various acting types and problems may be helpful.

Walter Wooden

This guy has turned up in quite a few amateur films. He's easy to spot. His stiff, unnatural style of walking coupled with his unmoving, expressionless face leads the viewer to believe he took acting lessons from Mount Rushmore, while his clipped, monotonous speech patterns remind one of Robby the Robot gone rusty. In short, he is stoic to a ludicrous degree.

Such wooden performances are usually a manifestation of nerves. The performer isn't accustomed to being the center of attention, as a result, he doesn't know how to behave when all eyes (and especially the eye of the camera) are on him.

Although this kind of performance is common among amateurs, there are methods by which a direc-

tor can draw a good performance from this type of actor.

Improvisations — a method used by many professionals — should prove helpful. If, for instance, a "Walter Wooden" is required to play a scene in which he discovers that his closest friend has been brutally murdered by a psychotic murderer, he will probably complain to his director that he can't relate to such an implausible situation, and if the actor doesn't believe in the situation, he will never convince his audience. The director, in this case, should arrange for the actor to improvise a scene requiring him to project the same emotion (extreme grief) in a different situation. He could, for instance, improvise a scene in which he receives a telegram informing him that a loved one has died, thus allowing the actor to deal with the required emotion in a situation with which he can relate.

Following the improv, the director should discuss the emotion with his actor. Was there a physical sensation accompanying the grief, a tightness in the pit of the stomach or the throat? What were his thoughts when he realized the death had occurred? Was he angry? Numb? In doing this, the director helps his actor connect with the emotion in the original decapitation scene.

Since most of Walter Wooden's acting problems are a manifestation of bad nerves, he would benefit from a series of relaxation exercises. Performers who utilize such exercises (easily found in any acting text) learn to isolate tensions in their bodies and, as a result, appear relaxed before the camera.

Harry Hambone

This guy inhabits the world of B movies as well as many amateur films. He's the guy who whimpers a bit too loudly during an emotional scene or rolls his eyes a little too widely to indicate madness. Harry's problem is his tendency to blow the average emotion out of proportion. The result is overacting.

Stage performers are required to project their facial expressions, gestures, and voices to the last row of the theatre in which they perform. As the movie camera is unmercifully close to its subject, performances delivered by stage trained actors are frequently larger than life. The director who recruits his actors from colleges or universities should keep this in mind since most college acting courses concentrate soley on stage training.

Directors can restrain "Harry Hambones" by showing them rushes (unedited film) of their work. It is difficult for a director to explain why a performance is overblown, consequently, it is helpful for the actor to see evidence of his overacting in order to tone down his performance. The real trick to mastering film acting is for the actor to appear as if he's not acting at all. While an actor on a stage may have to exaggerate an expression of anger in order to reach the last row of spectators, he can project this same emotion on film by merely tensing his mouth or eyes.

Step three, and the final step, is the shoot — the day on which the scenes are filmed. Amateur directors are notorious for allowing friends and relatives to observe the filmmaking process on this crucial day. Nothing, and I repeat, *nothing* is more distracting to an actor (especially a novice) who must concentrate 100% on believing in a fictional situation than the presence of an unneeded audience.

The audience should see the finished product and nothing more. Allowing visitors on the set creates anxiety in actors who already have enough to worry about. Sets should be closed to all but cast and crew.

In addition, those uncalculated delays that inevitably occur during a shoot will require actors to wait for varying lengths of time between takes. Such delays are far worse if the director and his crew fail to plan the technical aspects of their production well in advance of the shoot. If delays between takes become ridiculously lengthy, actors become bored. As a result, performances suffer.

One of the most difficult tasks faced by a director involves restraining his technical crew from giving advice to actors. Under no circumstances should anyone but the director tell an actor how to play a scene. Although actors rarely comment on the quality of lighting, sound, and photography, technicians—if given the opportunity—seem to thrive on informing actors that there was a more effective way of playing that crucial, emotional scene.

The reason for this is quite simple. The art of acting, unlike other art forms, doesn't allow the artist to externalize the creative product. For instance, the painter's ability is expressed on a canvas, the writer sees evidence of his creative drive on the printed page, the photographer has his portfolio. The actor, on the other hand, is unable to place his creative stamp on things outside of himself. The actor's body and voice are the tools with which he creates a work of art, his characterization.

Since technicians, like actors and actresses, have bodies and voices, they mistakenly assume that they have what it takes to create an effective characterization. As a result, laymen who wouldn't dare counsel musicians or painters are all too ready to give unsolicited advice to actors.

By the same token, actors tend to be the most sensitive artists in the face of criticism, as their creative tools (and products) are themselves. It is difficult for the actor to separate his product (the characterization) from himself, in his mind, the two are indelibly linked. If the director hopes to maintain a peaceful, creative climate, he should inform potential critics on his crew to practice silence, while establishing a bond of trust with performers, since he is the only one who will guide their characterizations.

Keeping this in mind, the director has to realize that each actor must be guided differently. If he learns how to obtain maximum results from each of his performers, he won't have to deal with those giggles and unintended laughs during his first screening, and his latest action thriller won't be unjustly classified a comedy. ■

Actor John Zaremba is "right" for the role of a scientist (from *Time Tunnel*).

THE ORIGINAL CINEMAGIC!

Here they are—original printing editions of Don Dohler's CINEMAGIC published between 1972 and 1978. Only the issues described are available, and quantities are extremely low. Although some material in these issues was reprinted in FILM MAGIC, many articles and features were not—and this is your only chance to own them in their original form. actual copies will never be reprinted!

#5—Film profiles on THE ABDUCTION OF GROG and PHANTOM ISLAND (an early amateur effort by Doug Beswick, of STAR WARS fame)... a capsule profile on Dan Noga's SF film TIME IS A CIRCLE, a 7-page feature on Cartoon Animation for the beginner, plus new film notices, exclusive photos & the editorial that predicts the coming of the "special effects" era in Hollywood movies!

Published January 1975 $4.00 each

#7—Profiles on a clay-animated version of PIT & THE PENDULUM, the Super 8 horror film THE WAGES OF SIN, photo-article on the films of Dick Taylor (great pix!), Glass Paintings, The Invisible Wino Returns, capsule profile on making a 3 headed dragon, plus new film notices, convention reports, exclusive photos.

Published July 1976 (Only 35 copies left)! $6.00 each

#10—Film profiles on DESTINATION MOON, an 8 mm version done in stop motion... news update on THE ALIEN FACTOR, Creating Realistic Miniature Sets, Double Exposures in Super 8, and Part 1 of Building Full Body Monster Suits... plus new film notices, SF convention reports, exclusive photos.

Published July 1977 $3.00 each

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PITTARO'S CLINIC

by Ernie Pittaro

If you have a question about a technique or a problem concerning filming or need to know about a technical detail here's the place to come! Mr. Pittaro is a 40 year veteran of special effects and film production, and he will answer your questions and help solve your problems. Just mail your question to Pittaro's Clinic in care of AMAZING CINEMA and watch for the answer on these pages. No personal replies are possible.

I have a Super 8 camera with automatic exposure control, and no manual override. How can I shoot day-for-night scenes without being able to stop down the lens?

—Greg Dohler
Baltimore, MD

It is necessary to use neutral density filters to cause the camera to compensate as much as it can, and having sufficient density to intentionally cause underexposure. The degree of underexposure will depend upon the speed of your lens, the type of film, the character and quantity of the daylight, and the specific effect that you are striving for.

Obtain gelatin filters, since they are far less expensive than glass ones. Gelatin filters must be handled with great care to avoid dirt and fingerprints. They should be held by the edges only. You can put these filters over the camera lens by making a suitable cardboard frame to accept the filters. The frame can be made in such a way as to be taped to the lens.

It is absolutely necessary to make some tests to determine the exact effect that you want. In addition to the neutral density filters, you may also wish to add a blue filter such as a CC30B if you like that type of effect.

A bright sunny day will allow for sharp shadows to be cast, simulating the point source of the full moon.

Below is a table that will designate the amount of exposure reduction that various neutral density filters will give.

NEUTRAL DENSITY (ND) FILTER	DECREASE IN STOPS
0.10	- 1/3
0.20	- 2/3
0.30	-1
0.40	-1-1/3
0.50	-1-2/3
0.60	-2

Several filters in combination can be used to decrease the exposure. However, for a four stop reduction, as an example, it is best to use two 0.60 filters in preference to four 0.30 filters, because every added filter tends to degrade the quality of the image. Also be aware that in adding the ND filters, the lens goes to wide open position, and therefore the depth of field will be substantially reduced. For this reason, focus carefully, and try to keep at long shots where the depth of field is inherently greater. ■

Product Guide

New items to aid or entertain you.

A listing in this section is not necessarily a product endorsement by AMAZING CINEMA unless specifically stated. Always inquire to the companies listed for more detailed information.

PUPPETS AND PEOPLE (Large Scale Animation in the Cinema) by S. S. Wilson, A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc. 170 pp., 6½ × 9½, hardbound, $12.00.

This book is a valuable addition to any stop-motion or special effects enthusiast's library. Under discussion are the details of replacement or displacement puppets, armatures, the necessary equipment and materials for puppet animation, control of motion and timing, and many other details that are useful to those working in the stop motion medium.

Composite work using static and traveling mattes is covered very well, and can inspire the reader to try some of the methods that are described in detail.

The author has generated terms, "dimensional animation" or "pupp pet animation" to define the subject matter encompassed by this book rather than the phrase "stop-motion". There seems to be some confusion among many of the terms, and some clarification is certainly needed. Stop-motion is often confused with "stop-action" and time-lapse is frequently confused with other forms of single frame work. The author's term "puppet animation" is too restrictive, because much stop-motion work does not involve puppets at all, but rather, three dimensional props of some kind or other.

Otherwise, the book is quite up to date, even having discussions about electronic mattes, and explores this medium with emphasis upon its limitations at the present state of the art.

There are a number of illustrations showing examples of the work of many familiar operators in the field, such as Harryhausen, Danforth, O'Brien, Farino, Bunin, to mention a few, but the illustrations in the book are not as good as one would wish, because of a combination of poor reproduction, and the fact that many pictures are blow-ups from film frames rather than production stills that were shot for the purpose. Despite this lack, the illustrations are interesting, and well worth studying, and do support the text very well.

There are a few line drawings to illustrate some of composite process work and the book closes with a valuable filmography and bibliography which can be used as an invaluable springboard for the stop motion zealot to further investigate this fascinating field of film work.

— Ernie Pittaro

CREATING REALISTIC TABLETOP SCENERY

—when you're not an artist

What do *King Kong*, *Earthquake*, and *Star Wars* have in common? Not much? Wrong! Oh, of course the storylines are different and so are the settings, but each of these films and dozens of other features have benefitted greatly from the unique skills of the *matte painter*. *Kong* boasted the talents of Mario Larrinaga and Byron Crabbe to create the mysterious, unreal world of Skull Island; the bulk of the devastation scenes in *Earthquake* were beautifully rendered by the great Albert Whitlock; and of course, where would *Star Wars* have been without the magical brush of Harrison Ellenshaw?

But what exactly *is* a matte painter? For those of you unfamiliar with the term, a matte painting is a marvelous and very demanding technique by which an artist can paint various elements (clouds, landscapes, etc.) and combine the artwork with live action footage to make it appear as one complete and realistic scene. Very often, the matte painting itself will become the entire background scene. And the technique is not confined to space epics, matte paintings are used extensively in all other types of films as well. Westerns, such as *McKenna's Gold*, often rely extensively on matte paintings.

The question is, if you're not an Albert Whitlock, how can you create these pieces of scenery? What if you're not an artist at all? The answer is: There are several different ways to create realistic miniature scenery, and you don't have to be a Michelangelo to do them!

There are three methods for preparing scenery for your films and, as you'll see, each method has several variations. The methods are: (a) Cut and paste; (b) Trace and paint; (c) Projection. As you become more accomplished with these techniques, you will be able to apply them to live action, full-scale productions as well as animated, tabletop films.

Cut and Paste

Let's begin with cut and paste. The first job is to assemble the necessary materials — the most important are books or magazines that contain good photographs of landscapes and terrain. There are several excellent ones: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, LIFE, FIELD & STREAM, and OUTDOOR LIFE, just to name a few. Now, don't start taking out subscriptions. You can usually find these and many other magazines at thrift stores (such as the Salvation Army ones) and at garage sales and flea markets at a fraction of their newsstand costs. Or, you may already have some of these magazines lying around in your basement or attic.

Next, get a good pair of scissors, an X-Acto or utility knife, some Elmer's or Sobo glue, a glue stick (such as Pritt) or rubber cement, and some cardboard. This cardboard can be cut from a supermarket box, providing it's fairly smooth. You'll also want some clear plastic, which is safer to use than glass. There are several good types, but GE's "Lexan" is excellent. Lexan is available in sheets 18"x 21"x 1/16" thick for around 75¢ each. However, check sizes and prices at your local plastics suppliers. You will also need a knife to cut the plastic, and the Plexiglass "Score-N-Snap" is ideal.

The first scene I'll discuss will be for use with tabletop miniatures and/or animation. Once you decide on the scene you want to create, it's a good idea to make a sketch of it (basic outlines are fine to guide you). Look through your magazines and cut out pictures that pertain to your scene. I have found it best to use the scissors for the bulk of the cutting and the X-Acto knife for long, straight cuts using a metal ruler to guide the blade.

You don't have to cut out entire pictures. Perhaps you'll want to use just *part* of a picture, like a rock, a tree, or a mountain range. By using various portions of different pictures, you can assemble your scene like a puzzle. A few points to keep in mind, though: make sure that all the pictures you choose have subjects that are lit from the same direction, are of a compatible color tone, and were taken under the same conditions (daylight, fair weather, rain, etc.). Also, check to see that the size of your various picture elements are in a proper scale to one another. You wouldn't want a small bed of rocks to dwarf a towering redwood!

Gather all your cut-outs and begin by first assembling the background. The size of your scene will be determined somewhat by how large the pictures are. Since you're using magazine cut-outs, the size of your scenery may not be very large, but this shouldn't prohibit you from trying this technique. There are several ways to incorporate the scene into your film, as you'll see later.

With cut-outs gathered, start by cutting the sheet of cardboard to the appropriate size. Now, lay your cut-outs on the cardboard and move them around until you're satisfied with the composition. Be careful to use the smallest cut-outs in the background, since object size decreases with distance, and you must create a forced perspective. Apply the adhesive to the backs of the pictures and place them on the cardboard. The best adhesive to use here is rubber cement or a glue stick because they will not warp or wrinkle the cut out.

Now for the foreground. Take a sheet of the Lexan plastic and again arrange your remaining cut-outs. Be certain not to obscure any important details in the background. To adhere the pictures to the plastic, it may be necessary to first glue the cut-out to a piece of thin cardboard (like the back of a steno pad), then stick *that* on the plastic. If you still have difficulty, get a small tube of Eastman 910 adhesive for plastics. The easiest way to adhere a picture to the plastic is to simply tape it, as I've done in my example (Photo 1). However, if the scene is to be exposed to hot movie lights for a long period, the permanence of the 910

Article & Photos by
TIM SUNLEY

Photo 1

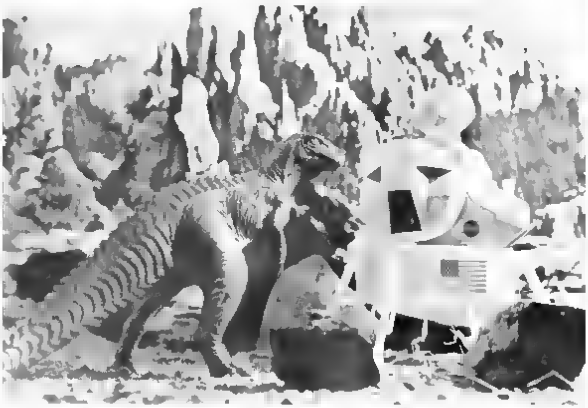

Photo 2

Photo 3

adhesive may be required.

It's also possible to create free-standing scenic pieces with the cut-and-paste method. Merely paste your picture to the cardboard, carefully cut out the outline of it, and attach some sort of "support" to the back of it, such as small wood blocks. I've done this with the foreground rocks in Photo #2, and the wood blocks actually cast a shadow (seemingly that of a rock) when side-lit.

Although it is desirable to use cut-and-paste scenery in conjunction with an animated model, it is not essential. Such a scene could also be incorporated into your film as a cutaway. For example, if the live action showed an explorer climbing to the top of the mountain, a cutaway shot of your cut-and-paste scene could be edited in to show what the explorer sees. In this way, your miniature scenery could be a lot smaller than would be necessary if used with an animation model.

Possibly one of the most exciting applications of the cut-and-paste method is to use it in conjunction with live action filming. In this case, pre-production planning is of the utmost importance. You must decide what the scene will look like and where the action will take place so as to not interfere with the paste-ups. You'll also have to be careful to match the lighting in the live action and cut-outs you use.

For the example (Photo #3), the automobile tire was photographed at close range. I used a Polaroid "Button" camera and cut the picture out immediately after it developed. I then taped the cut-out to a sheet of Lexan and had an assistant hold the plastic in front of the camera in the proper position. A neighbor stood some distance in the background and the camera (a GAF LCM) was adjusted for maximum depth-of-field to keep both the tire and background actor in focus. It was done rather hastily, but it does illustrate the possible uses of this technique.

Trace and Paint

Beware! This method *does* require a little brushwork, but don't worry — an art degree isn't necessary!

The most important piece of equipment you'll use here is a graphic projector. There are several types on the market, but a good (and inexpensive) one is the Project-A-Scope, which sells for $12.00. It's a simple machine. The Project-A-Scope is placed on top of any printed material (photos, magazine, etc.) or even three-dimensional objects and through a system of mirrors and an illuminating bulb, projects an image of the object or picture on a wall or any surface.

You'll also need some standard pencils, an artgum eraser, poster paints, watercolors, several brushes of different sizes, and white posterboard. All of these supplies are readily available at an art store.

Photo 4

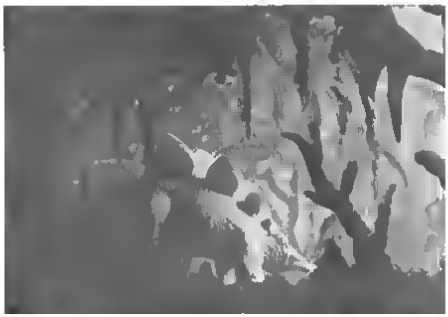

Photo 5

Photo 6

As with the cut-and-paste method, you'll need reference materials in the form of magazines, picture books, or photographs. Begin by attaching a piece of posterboard, cut to the size of your scene, to a wall. Select the picture you want to use and place it on a chair (you'll be placing the Project-A-Scope on it and moving the chair back and forth to adjust the size of the image). Darken the room, turn on the projector, and focus the image on the posterboard. Can you guess what happens next? Right! You simply trace the elements of the scene you want. Simple enough, but there is one shortcoming to the Project-A-Scope: it only covers a small area, and you may have to reposition it several times to get the *entire* scene you want. This "section tracing" is not difficult.

As you can probably see, you can be very selective as to what goes into your scene. In fact, with this method, you can use several *different* pictures to create one composite background tracing, if you wish. The source material is unlimited — color photos, black and white, line drawings, and so on — since your end result will be a mere pencil tracing.

The most difficult part of completing your scene may be the actual painting (coloring) if you are not an artist, but don't let it scare you. Try to think in terms of painting by numbers. Each object has a base or main color plus a light side and a shadow side. Your most important consideration will be suggesting these light and shadow areas in your scene, and you can refer to the actual pictures you used to see where to place them.

A simple procedure is to select your base color with white and paint the light side of the scene, then mix the base color with black and paint the shadow side of the scene (Photo #4 shows this basic coloring). If you don't feel comfortable with adding detail, it's okay to be a little "obscure." In this case, watercolors really come in handy. With these paints you can create very impressionistic backgrounds by dabbing and swirling the colors to merely *suggest* shapes and objects somewhat like the misty jungles of Skull Island. To add depth to such a scene, try painting a foreground scene (with cut-and-paste) with poster paint, laid on thick and dark. In combination with the abstract watercolor background, the illusion can be interesting (see Photo 5 for an example).

I won't get too sophisticated here in regard to painting, or I'll defeat the whole purpose of this article. A little practice will produce surprisingly good results, and experimenting is a *must*. Try additional methods of coloring, as well as different types of paint and posterboard to see what kind of effects you can come up with.

Projection

Much has been written about front and rear projection, but a bit of review won't hurt, besides, my approach has a slightly new twist.

Some previously used materials will also be used in this technique, as well as some new ones: some art

vellum or high quality tracing paper, and (here's the new twist) a Viewmaster reel projector. You could also use the Project-A-Scope or a slide projector, but I've gotten excellent results with the Viewmaster projector — its image is bright and clear and the subject matter available is full of variety. You will also need some of the Lexan plastic for this method.

In this case, I am going to discuss rear projection only, although this technique is possible with front projection using a beam-splitter and Scotchlite. Rear projection, though, is less critical and less expensive in the long run.

With the projection method you'll have very little actual creating to do. Most of the work involves the proper placement of the various pieces of equipment. Begin, as usual, by selecting the background scene you want to use, and insert it into your projector. Next, Scotch tape a sheet of the vellum or tracing paper to the Lexan. This will be your projection screen. Vellum and tracing paper come in a variety of sizes, so get the largest possible size to accomodate your scenic needs and to completely cover the Lexan. Use a support system of wood to brace your screen.

Set the projector behind the screen, focus it, and adjust the image to a size that suits your needs. On the opposite side of the screen (the camera side) set up your miniature set pieces — if, indeed, you require them. These could be cut-and-paste set-pieces (like the rocks described earlier) or physical objects. It's important that the scale of the foreground set-pieces matches your background image.

The two most critical aspects of this method are lighting and depth-of-field. Make absolutely certain that the light on your set comes from the same direction as the light in your projected image. It should also match in intensity. Finally, set your camera for maximum depth-of-field (usually in the "wide angle" position, if you cannot manually stop down your lens) and you are ready to begin filming. My example of this method (Photo #6) shows a Viewmaster projection of a lion combined with foreground set-pieces (cut-and paste rocks) and a model lion.

You might eventually want to invest in something called Lenscreen, which is made by 3M, instead of the vellum or tracing paper. Lenscreen yields a much sharper and brighter image, however, if you're a beginner, the vellum and/or tracing paper are fine until you've mastered this method.

In Closing...

Although my art background is extensive, I've created the accompanying scenes quickly and in as uncomplicated a manner as possible. In fact, your own results will probably be a lot better. The point is to use these ideas for all they're worth. Combine them, add to them, come up with your own variations. The possibilities are as unlimited as your own imagination. ■

SUPPLIERS

Ken Morse
Morse Graphic Art Supply Co.
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Cleveland, Ohio 44115

For $15.00 postpaid will ship the Project-A-Scope. also supplies all the art materials discussed.

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Classic Film Salute

BLACK FRIDAY

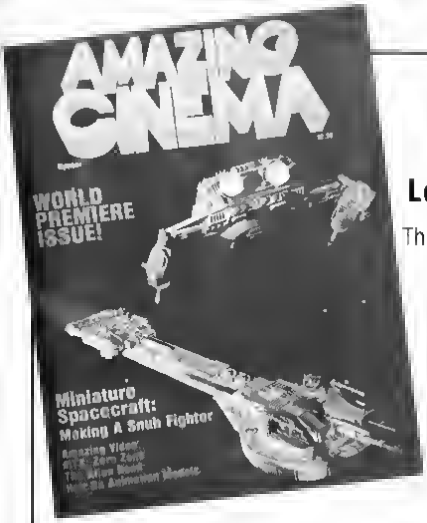
by DON LEIFERT

Originally slated to play the role of an absent minded college professor who unwittingly receives the brain of a dying gangster, Boris Karloff was pronounced unconvincing in his test footage as gang leader Red Cannon for Universal's *Black Friday*. As a result, Stanley Ridges was cast in the dual role. Bela Lugosi, who was originally chosen to play the scientist responsible for the miraculous brain transplant, was told to play a supporting role as one of Red Cannon's gang members, while Karloff inherited the meatier mad doctor role.

Despite such confusing goings on in the casting department, *Black Friday* emerged as one of the better offerings during the '40's. Universal launched the film with some offbeat publicity involving Lugosi's death scene. According to studio hype, Lugosi was hypnotized prior to performing in a scene where he dies by suffocation. This flamboyant death scene, coupled with Karloff's performance as the sinister Dr. Sovac, added able support to the true star of the film, Stanley Ridges.

Ridges managed to play the Jeykll/Hyde role of Kingsley/Cannon with little make-up. As the menacing mobster, Red Cannon, Ridges appears thirty years younger than the aging, pitiful English professor, Kingsley, who suffers memory lapses when the evil Cannon emerges from the dark side of his brain. The actor managed these transitions by altering character rhythms (the manner in which the characters move), hair style, and vocal patterns. Ridges, one of the few actors to attempt to portray such radical transformations without burying himself under a mountain of make-up, manages to upstage Karloff and Lugosi, while proving that inspired acting can create the illusion of change as effectively as the brush of a capable make-up artist. ■

Above: Stanley Ridges steals the show from Karloff & Lugosi in *Black Friday*. Below, left: A highly unusual behind-the-scenes shot of Lugosi and Karloff posing with some chorus girls (note Lugosi's expression). Below: A moody shot of Karloff as Dr. Sovac, as he prepares to operate.



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AC 2

Animating Physical Objects

Want to make a cereal box spin wildly?

Or a bottle dance around the table? Here's how!

Art, photos & text by **Ernest M. Pittaro**

Of the various special effects in filmmaking, stop motion, or single frame photography, is the most controllable technique of all. It is also one of the most demanding. By definition, stop motion photography deals with the animation of solid objects as compared to the animation of flat artwork (cel animation). It must not be confused with time-lapse, which is the single frame technique of photographing self-animating objects such as plants growing, or the sun setting.

Success in stop motion is dependent upon planning everything in advance, down to the last detail, rigging the materials to be photographed in the most expedient way, and having dependable camera equipment to complete the process.

A Motor Drive Is A Must

The heart of the system is a camera which can be equipped with a reliable single-frame motor drive. Such a motor is a must in a 16 mm and 35mm gauges. Most Super 8mm cameras are already equipped with electric motor drives capable of single frame action. Good stop motion work cannot be done with a spring drive because of the variations of exposure that would be apparent in the finished film. Any type of good animation motor will do, and the camera must be fitted to the camera's drive in such a way as to assure that it will always stop with the shutter in the closed position. The camera should have a good parallax-free (or through-the-lens) means of viewing the precise area that is being photographed.

If the camera is to be mounted on a dolly or tracking system, for animated camera moves, every precaution should be taken to assure the operator that no unwanted movement will take place. The dolly should be jacked up so that it will not roll or move in any way. If a tripod is used, it should be a sturdy one, mounted on a sturdy triangle spreader, or bolted or clamped down securely. Some animators actually mount their tripods into cinder blocks, encasing the legs with cement, which guarantees a rock-steady performance. If the tripod head is not to be moved during the shot, it's wise to lock the head with a miniature jack, or brace it in place with C-clamps, for maximum stability.

In studios that specialize in stop motion work, it is common practice to mount the camera on a lathe bed which can be calibrated carefully to plot camera moves along predictable paths. Many special arrangements have been built to have a very accurately moving camera carriage on rails for long moves.

The Spinning Box

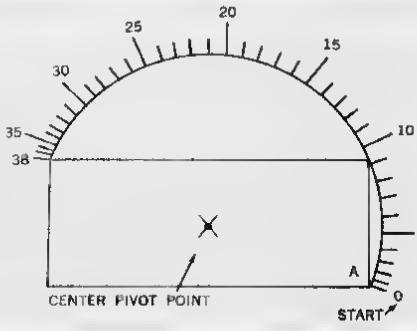
Let us suppose that the first stop motion project requires us to photograph a box of cereal which faces the camera and then turns itself around at a certain point to reveal its reverse side. The best way to accomplish this is to turn the box upside down and draw two diagonal lines from corner to corner on its bottom. At this center point, puncture the box with a small straight pin, and drive the pin into the tabletop setting. After a couple of light blows with a hammer the pin will have a tendency to bend. When this happens, if you are sure that the point has taken hold well, nip off the rest of the pin with wire cutters, leaving about 1/4-inch of the pin sticking out of the surface. Carefully set the box with the punctured hole onto the pin stub. Now there is a reliable pivot point, and the box can be turned very easily upon this fulcrum.

The box should be lighted carefully to make certain that there are no reflections at the start and finish of filming. Reflections in intermediate positions are nothing to worry about, because in live action these transitory reflections are quite natural.

The box should now be placed in the start position. When the camera is suitably lined up, a light pencil mark should be made at the rear of the box, on the tabletop surface, at the corner of the box that will be moving away from the camera on the turn. The box should be moved about 1/16 of an inch, and a very light dot made on the surface of the table at the same corner. The next move should be about 1/8 of an inch, and another dot made, and then another dot at 3/16 of an inch. From here on a dot should be made every 1/4-inch, until the box is 3/8 of an inch away from its rear position. When this dot is made, the next one should be 3/16 of an inch away, the next 1/8 inch, the last dot 1/16 of an inch. Figure 1 shows the calibration once it is completed.

With this calibration, the turning of the box will give a nice, smooth turn, with a smooth start and stop. The action to let the box make such a half-turn from front to back as calibrated will result in approximately 32 frame exposures. Obviously, larger increments will produce the effect of a faster turn, and smaller increments will give the effect of slowing down the action.

Figure 1.



Rectangle represents a top view of a cereal box which is to be animated. The calibration is for a 38-frame turn. In practice, the center of the box is determined by drawing diagonals from opposite corners on the bottom. The center is where the two lines intersect. A straight pin is driven into the surface upon which the box is to stand and it turns on this pivot. Using corner "A" as a calibration point, very faint marks can be drawn along the circular path that would be described by that corner as the box turns. Note that, for the best action, marks from position 0 to 5 gradually increase in spacing. From there until about position number 30 or 31, the marks are evenly spaced and after that they become closer together. The effect is to slow the movement of the box as it approached the final position. (In the actual setup, the marks should be drawn very faintly so the camera won't pick them up.) If you want to make faster turns, just make fewer calibrations.

This technique can be applied to almost any object. It can be used when a turntable is not available and a smooth turning of a prop is required. The light pencil marks when placed behind the box will not be visible, and if extremely tiny marks are made within camera range, they will not be detected, either.

In timing such actions, it is necessary to shoot a number of frames *before* the action starts, and again after it has been concluded. If, for example, reading time is required on the front side of the cereal box for some essential information, about 150 frames (a little over 6 seconds running time) should be shot before the animation begins. Then the turn of the box is animated. After completing the animation, an added number of frames should be shot to allow time for the information on the rear of the box to be read.

A variation of this shot can be made with a zoom lens on the camera, when the turn of the box is completed, zoom in frame by frame. Again, the zoom will be successful only if careful calibrations have been made. The zoom's wide-angle "out" and telephoto "in" positions must be determined beforehand. When these extremes are noted, apply marked tapes to these points on the lens barrel to indicate the two positions (as long as the zoom lens is such that reasonable calibrations can be drawn upon the tape). If the zoom is a slow one, and long, it would not be practical to attempt to mark calibrations around the lens barrel, since the marks would be too fine and close together to allow accurate zoom movement.

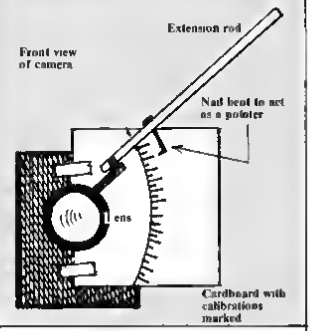
The alternative is to secure an extending lever to the zoom lens handle, so that a large arc can be swept over the calibrated cardboard placed beneath the end of this extending handle. You should secure a piece of cardboard flat in such a way as to allow the sweeping lever to come in contact with it so that more accurate calibrations can be drawn upon the cardboard. The extension on the zoom lever can then be carefully and accurately placed from mark to mark. To make this more accurate, cut the end of the extension lever to form a finely pointed arrow (see Figure 2). If this is done carefully, and everything is secured very well with tape, animated zooms of 48 frames or more can be made with accuracy and comfort. As with the cereal box calibrations, the marks for the extension arm should be graduated for "slow in" and "slow out" action of the lens.

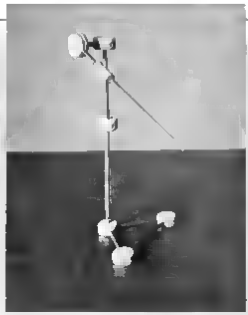
If you have a tracking set-up or a lathe bed, the lens, whether prime or zoom, can also be prepared by marked tapes to allow for complete frame by frame focus changes. Properly prepared calibration tapes made by viewing on a "dry run" will allow for the making of as many marks as necessary to keep focus all the way through a scene.

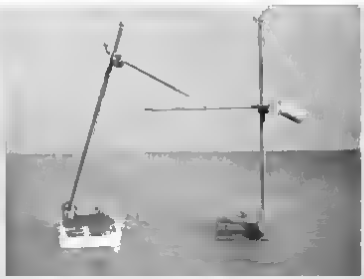
Once the lens is calibrated for zoom and focus, while shooting frame by frame, the lens is moved one increment to the next, changing each position of the zoom control accurately. If a position is overrun, return the zoom control to your starting position and come *back* to the mark you missed so that you take up any possible backlash in the lens. If the calibration tape has been carefully made, and the extension lever has a good-sized scale to follow, and the moves are made accurately, the finished animation will show a very smooth and well-executed zoom.

If you choose to combine animated camera movements—such as a zoom with a tilt or pan—it's wise to prepare a frame by frame exposure sheet for such moves, with a column for each phase of the action. Then, when the zoom lens is moved, it can be so checked on the exposure sheet, when the pan move is made, it can be checked off, and so on. By keeping track of each move, it avoids your forgetting what exposures and moves have been made

Figure 2.







Far left: A simple way to make an effective surface gauge is with Tinkertoy parts (a standard box will provide enough parts for several gauges, so that different points of an object can be gauged simultaneously). Left: Professional machinists gauges. The one on the left has cloth attached to its base to prevent scratching the tabletop surface. Note that the one on the right has a wad of wax on its forward pointer and a cork stuck to the rear of the pointer. This is to prevent cutting yourself when the gauge is not being used.

if, for example, you are interrupted by a phonecall.

Making A Bottle Dance

Moves in animation need not be restricted to sliding actions. Objects can be made to move about in many off-balance positions—dancing, flying through the air, and doing almost anything that you can think of. Let's consider the problem of animating a soda bottle in a rhythmic dance. The soundtrack should be recorded first, and then each musical beat and cue point is marked on a frame by frame exposure sheet. The "hits"—the points at which the beat is sharply defined—are noted. These are the points at which the animation reaches an extreme so that the action will "hit" on the beat.

The bottle can be progressively animated into a tilting position by using tiny wooden wedges reinforced with Flexowax (also called Dermawax or mortician's wax) or double-coated tape. The wedges must be placed so that the bottle itself conceals them from the camera's view. At times, pins driven into the set surface can be strategically placed to keep the bottle tilted at the desired angle. For positions demanding that the bottle fly through the air, support rods made of wood dowels or steel rods (obtainable at large hardware stores) can support the bottle from the rear of the set. Again, the support rod must be positioned in a way that the bottle conceals it from the camera. Regardless of the method of supporting the bottle, each move must be controlled by careful calibration. To attempt to "wing" the position changes without calibration would result in erratic or uneven animation.

In any such object animation, a surface gauge is one of the best means of registration. A surface gauge, which is an adjustable pointer mounted on a base (and made for machinists), can be used so that the pointed end is moved to indicate a specific spot of an object that is being animated. In this way, the gauge gives a point of reference that can be held as a comparison for the cameraman to see where the object (or model) was in the last frame, and where it will *be* in setting up for the next frame. Once a satisfactory move has been made, the surface gauge is removed from the set and the next frame is exposed. The gauge is then placed in the next position and the object moved again.

Although professional metal surface gauges are expensive, you can construct one out of Tinkertoy parts, and it will serve the purpose well. A wooden Tinkertoy dowel can be filed down to a satisfactory point on one end, and the entire gauge can be assembled in a few minutes (see photo).

Flying Objects

One problem in stop motion of physical objects is having them appear to "fly" through the air. Naturally, this requires fighting gravity, and the three solutions are: Suspending objects on thin wires, support by concealed rods (as discussed earlier), shooting on glass.

The third solution is probably the best for physical objects. For lightweight objects, like ping-pong balls, a sheet of glass can be mounted upright. With your normal live action background behind the glass, you can animate the ping-pong ball across the glass—giving the illusion that it has "flown" across a room. This is accomplished by adhering a steel washer to the ping-pong ball. Then, a small, but powerful, Alnico magnet can be placed on the opposite side of the glass and will pull the steel washer strongly enough to hold the ball in any position. Larger objects, such as a cigarette pack, can be mounted to small rubber suction cups and applied to the glass. In a pinch, Dermawax or double-sided tape can be used, but both of these tend to lose their grip under the heat of movie lights, and both may leave marks on the glass after each move.

For heavier objects, an alternative method is to work with a sheet of glass in a flat position, supported by wood sawhorses. This is more trouble to set up, since you must rig the camera to shoot straight down (vertically), and you must arrange any background *beneath* the glass, lying on its back, so that in the final film everything appears normal. But objects animated on glass this way eliminate the worry about gravity at all. The ping-pong ball, for example, could be cradled in a cardboard ring or rubber washer to prevent it from rolling around. A three-dimensional (but small) model of a spaceship could be smoothly animated across a large sheet of glass, with an appropriate "starfield" background placed beneath it.

The usual precautions to prevent reflections in the glass must be observed here: use a black shadowboard or card to mask the front of the camera so that reflections off its shiny surface won't stray onto the glass. Position lights at an angle to the glass to avoid reflections (and mask the lights so that they are controllable).

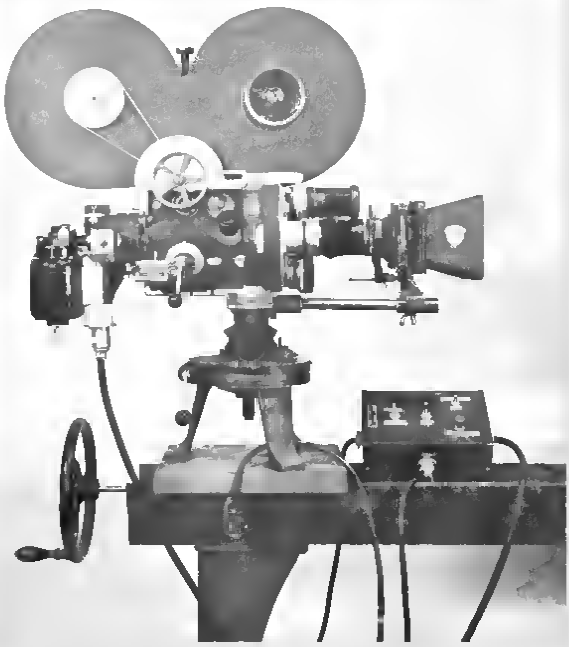
Proper Timing — An Important Aspect

As with cel animation, the most important trick of the game in stop motion is that of proper timing. In any stop motion work you must consider the nature and the speed of the action, and the length and reasons for pauses. If we consider one prop going through four different paths of action, it is absolutely mandatory for pauses to be worked into the scene.

Let's imagine a scene in which a box moves into camera range from offstage to center screen. The box turns completely around, the lid opens to disclose its contents, and the box then disappears, leaving the contents to disperse themselves in a geometric pattern. If these actions followed one another without any pause, the result would be frenetic and confusing. The scene should be planned to have eight or more frames of background alone before the box makes its appearance. Then you animate the box entering camera range. When the box arrives in center screen, an accent "hold" of about twelve frames should be shot with no animation at all. Then the action of the turn may take place, ending with another "hold" of, say, 24 frames. Next, the opening box lid is animated to a "hold" position of possibly 64 frames, to enable the viewer to see what's in the box. The box can then disappear or dissolve away. In matching position, the contents should be arranged and "held" for about 32 additional frames after the dissolve or disappearance is over. Then the contents may be animated to their closing position for somewhere between 32 and 64 frames, or even more if the action demands it. After the action is completed, a 128-frame "hold" will be in order, and the sequence is completed.

With these "holds" as accents, the entire effect is improved, and the labor has been simplified by adding much needed footage.

In summing up, remember that physical objects can be animated to do whatever you want. As long as you accurately control the action, by using calibrations, surface gauges, and the other devices I've mentioned, you will get results that are totally smooth, professional, and realistic ■



The Professional Stop Motion Camera

The 35mm Bell & Howell 2709 camera with Type I shuttle for extremely accurate registration as required for complicated stop motion and multiple exposure work. The apparatus at the rear of the camera is the stop motion drive which will allow the camera to make an exposure of one frame at a time, forward or backward. This drive is fitted with a Veeder counter which counts each frame as exposed. The frame counter can also run forward or backward regardless of the direction of the camera, to simplify exposure sheet calculations. The counter facing you (near the hand crank) measures feet and frames. The large gear seen above this is attached to the expanded shutter scale for making single frame dissolves of various lengths.
Below right, is the control box for the stop motion drive, allowing for forward or reverse operation of the camera; single frame, or continuous, off, and on, with a push button for making the exposure and an auxiliary cable which leads to a foot pedal for making exposures. The camera is mounted on a precision gear head which can be calibrated for single frame pan and tilt moves. The large handwheel at the lower left is used to move the camera frame by frame along the ways of a heavy duty lathe bed, for approach shots. The matte box at the front of the camera allows for filtration, holdback mattes, before-the-lens distortion effects (such as multi-faceted prisms) and, of course, to ensure that no stray light strikes the taking lens directly.

FIEND

BLOOD & GUTS VIOLENCE...OR GOOD STORY & CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT...WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Writer/Director Don Dohler chose the latter, and now the distribution odds are against him. FIEND transcends the current crop of "horror" films and richly deserves to be seen by all serious fans of the genre

Article by BILL GEORGE

Photos by RICHARD GEIWITZ & DON DOHLER
Special frame enlargements by TIM SUNLEY

A prerequisite for the conception of the "modern" horror film is generous doses of sex and blood & guts, or a combination of these factions. Forget plotlines—literally—because only a semblance of story actually exists in many of today's fright films. If box office receipts are a barometer of popularity, severed limbs are *in*, while genre films, such as Peter Weir's *Picnic At Hanging Rock* and *The Last Wave*, devoid of brutality to women and violent influences, are restricted to brief engagements at art houses.

Fifteen years ago, Herschell G. Lewis, who pioneered the blood & guts field with *Blood Feast*, *2000 Maniacs*, and others, was labeled a perverse and amoral filmmaker, more prone to work in a morgue than a movie set. Today he is considered a man who was ahead of his time. 1980 introduced a resurgence of horror film spawns, the majority of which regress to Lewis' basic depiction of graphic violence. Each subsequent film (*Friday The 13th*, *Mother's Day*, *My Bloody Valentine*, ad nauseum) has documented a precedent for body counts, with an emphasis on slashed throats and squirting blood.

A horror movie with a PG rating these days is considered to have the plague by "in-the-know" distributors since it has been determined, the audiences want "more blood!" Suppose, however, somebody challenges this limited thinking? Suppose somebody would contest the trade rumor that PG horror movies are commercially impotent?

Last fall, Gary Svehla (an AMAZING CINEMA Staff Writer and Editor of MIDNIGHT MARQUEE) informed me that he viewed a private screening of Don Dohler's latest horror film, *Fiend*. Gary's reactions to it were mixed: "Great film, but not enough blood & guts." This ambivalent opinion aroused my curiosity enough to leap at the chance to see a subsequent screening of *Fiend* at Dohler's house (along with a 50-person audience, which, unlike a private screening, helped keep my viewpoint strictly objective).

True, *Fiend* is anemic compared to the dozens of blood & guts programmers that have flooded the market recently. But *Fiend*, made for less than $60,000, is a deceptively complex film that resourcefully develops its characters by avoiding mindless, plotless violence and spilled entrails. The sentiments and esthetics of the movie are rooted in the (apparent) simplicity of the 40's (complete with a post-credit prologue which gives "historical" revelations of the mythical title creature).

The story begins, appropriately enough, with a moody title sequence in a graveyard at night. Soon afterwards, a supernatural entity (the Fiend) enters the grave of a long buried corpse and brings fresh life to the cadaver. Assuming the "human" identity of Eric Longfellow (played by Don Leifert), the resurrected corpse parasitically drains the life of mortal victims, transferring their life giving energies into his own body (depicted as a red glow, an optical effect achieved through rotoscoping done by David W. Renwick). A steady diet of energy transferral restores youth to Longfellow, who degenerates on a regular basis (a sort of "Dorian Gray" in real life).

The clever Longfellow opens a music academy, and moves into a middle class suburban neighborhood, gaining an air of respectabili

Right: Portrait of Don Leifert as the "Fiend," as rendered by his real-life sister, Cheryl Young.


YOUNG

ty. He hires Dennis Frye (played by George Stover) to perform mundane tasks: keep the books, run the academy, etc. Frye is a dedicated and loyal pawn to Longfellow, who obviously has more insidious pursuits in mind than tutoring would-be Beethoven's.

As the plot unfolds, we are introduced to Gary and Marsha Kender (portrayed by Richard Nelson and Elaine White), next door neighbors of Longfellow's who are typical suburbanities. However, Gary starts becoming very suspicious of the man next door, and a series of local strangulations and equally bizarre events add fuel to Kender's fire. When an 11-year-old girl is murdered right behind Kender's house (while he is out), he confronts Longfellow, who has created an alibi with Dennis Frye's help, and conveniently dishes up ambiguous answers to Kender's probing questions. But deep down, Kender is quietly convinced that something is all wrong with Longfellow, and he continues piecing together the mystery.

Through a series of events, Kender actually reads about the one and only "known" account of a Fiend (and the traits and characteristics all fit Longfellow to the letter). Later, against his wife's wishes, Kender tracks down the graveyard where a "corpse" had vanished a year earlier, and through information gained by the cemetary's caretaker, Jimmy Barnes (Del Winans), Kender finally has the proof that will link Longfellow to the murders, and prove—incredibly—that he is not the "man" people think he is.

While Kender races back to his home community, a neighborhood teenager, Scotty (played by Dohler's 13-year-old son, Greg), gets curious when he spies Longfellow departing his house and moving stealthily through the woods. Scotty follows, and is witness to Longfellow strangling his own assistant—Dennis Frye (who has begun to weaken under the pressure of the cops and Kender's probing). Scotty runs off, terrified, and is reluctant to tell anyone what he has seen. Fortunately, the neighborhood children are aware that Kender is on the look-out for information, and Scotty finally goes to him.

It is at this point that the film's elements build rapidly toward a climax, aided tremendously by some tense cross-cutting sequences that leave the viewer literally on the edge of the chair. The major characters all come into play—Longfellow, Gary and Marsha Kender, and Scotty—and the ending hits with several shocks and exciting, fast-paced action. Unfortunately, with a TV deal pending, I cannot reveal what happens in the final 15 minutes of *Fiend*. If I did, I would get hate mail, since it would ruin the film for those of you who will someday get to see it.

Above: Don Leifert strikes a menacing pose as the newly resurrected corpse stalking through a graveyard.

But what of the concept? What of the lack of graphic violence? Allow me to clarify a few things: first of all, *Fiend* may lack the blood & guts, but it is *brutal* in concept, and several effective death scenes have created cries of outrage from many viewers, this is particularly evident in the scene in which Longfellow slowly and quietly kills the little girl (played perfectly by Dohler's daughter, Kim). She is murdered in broad daylight right *in* the neighborhood, without a trace of a witness.

Actor Don Leifert, who plays Longfellow, comments, "It's as much a film about middle class mentality and the values that exist in suburbia as it is about a homicidal maniac on the loose." While the film avoids any pretense other than entertainment, its ambiguities are worth noting. Similar to George Romero's movies about the decline of the American patriarchy and corruption of the family unit, *Fiend* subtley alludes to this metaphor with an opening shot of a miniature American flag, decaying on the plot of a forgotten grave. The suburban allegiance to consumerism (personified by scenes of a slick shopping center, Kender drinking Pabst beer, and other media-hyped products) not only amplifies a dependence on suburban conformity, but also provides the hero (Kender) with some sinister insights of Eric Longfellow. Though Longfellow is admittedly eccentric, his neighbors are immune to his abrasive behavior and customs because he absorbs the middle class rituals—getting the mail, washing the car, maintaining a respectful profession, etc. The Fiend has so perfectly adapted himself to urban ideology that he dismisses superstition with a sexist comment (to Kender) "That sort of thing is for children...and women."

A departure from typical environmental conditions, however, motivates the suspicions of Kender. Longfellow's cellar littered with personal artifacts that are anything but typical, is furnished, but not *finished* in the customary tradition. When Kender inquires as to why "there's no paneling or insulation," Longfellow calmly shrugs it off as being "About as finished as I require." This arouses Kender's fears, since it

does not qualify as typically domesticated quarters.

Kender is later outraged when the little girl (Kim Dohler) is killed, as he remarks to Marsha, "I can't believe that a little girl can be murdered in a *suburban* neighborhood...", but his distress seems less elicited by compassion than by a violation of his provincial conservatism. *Fiend* star Leifert notes, "If the Kender character were any more obnoxious, the audience would be rooting for Longfellow."

Limited funds forced Don Dohler to establish a precedent for talent, withdrawing expensive optical effects (although Dave Renwick's red "glow" and animated spirit effects are refreshing, and not over-done) and substituting enough careful plot and character embellishments to distract audiences from the budgetry shortcomings. But movies that previously risked humanizing the characters, at the expense of reducing the visceral appeal (including the 1956 version of *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* and George Romero's *Martin*), have jeapordized their prospects at the box-office.

Dohler enjoyed a rapport with his actors that is apparent in the on-screen relationships. According to Elaine White, who plays Marsha Kender, "Don is great to work with. He's very easy-going and helped us identify with our characters." Dohler wrote the role of Marsha Kender as an aggressive housewife, an amicable though independent spouse who participates in civic affairs—including heading up a local boy scout troop (though the Kenders have no children). The portrayal abandons the "screamer" stereotype of women visible in most current horror films. Elaine's only previous experience was high school and college theatre. "I didn't know what to expect as far as technicalities were concerned," she candidly explained, "because we shot out of sequence. Unlike the theatre, film has no building point, there's no time to really get into character for one take. Don also helped me drop 'stagey' mannerisms that are necessary for stage acting."

Top, left to right: Longfellow kills a young woman (Pam Dohler), and later slashes her photograph as part of his murder ritual. Next row, left to right: Marsha Kender (Elaine White) hears some disturbing news from her husband, Gary (Richard Nelson); Dennis Frye (George Stover) is murdered by Longfellow. Next, left to right: Longfellow threatens a suburban woman (Anna Dorbert) with a chain, Jimmy Barnes (Del Winans) is the comical cemetary groundskeeper. Bottom: Don Dohler explains a tense scene to his son, Greg, who has a key role in *Fiend*

Below, top to bottom: Longfellow vicinously attacks Gary Kender, Don Leifert's manical expression and the chain add up to death for another victim; Richard Gerwitz shoots the scene where the ambulance crew takes away the body of a little girl (the crew and rescue truck are real, as are the bystanders, who are all Director Dohler's actual neighbors). Tom Griffith is terrified as a horribly degenerated Longfellow chokes the life from him.

Top: Don Dohler adjusts focus for a close-up while cameraman Richard Gerwitz composes the shot. Middle: Gerwitz lines up a low-angle shot of Don Leifert choking Tom Griffith. Bottom: George Staver, as Dennis Frye, is brutally shoved against a tree by his boss, Longfellow.

Don Leifert concedes that Dohler's interpretation of the Kenders' marital status is "Very believable—Kender talks *at* instead of *to*, his wife." Leifert is no stranger to movies. He has now starred in two Dohler films, and is slated to co-star in the next. His role in *Fiend* is a far cry from Ben Zachary, the mysterious hero of Dohler's first feature, *The Alien Factor*.

"I based Longfellow on 'Iago', the villain from Shakespeare's *Othello*, a character that Samuel Coleridge called a 'motiveless malignancy'" says Leifert. "Longfellow is just such a character. He's one dimensional because he is the total essence of evil. Since Longfellow was originally buried for a long time, and has returned as an animated corpse, I tried to give the impression that he was moving 33 rpm in a world that moves at 78 rpm. I have incredibly fast speech rhythms, so I had to make a conscious effort to slow them down."

While preview audiences have been impressed with Leifert's performance, he is critical of *some* scenes. "I shudder during the scenes where I stab photographs of my victims—I think I went over the top in those instances, but the addition of mood music saved my ass." Leifert's acting credits are continental, including training in London. He recently directed a very successful production of *David and Lisa*, as well. He also suggested several story concepts and improvisations for *Fiend* that Dohler approved.

George Stover, publisher of CINEMACABRE Magazine, and another stock player in Dohler films, provided the comic portrayal of Dennis Frye, Longfellow's unwitting stooge and a definitive wimp. "When Don wrote the screenplay, I know he intended Frye to be the comedy relief, at least to an extent," explains Stover. "However, I'm positive that he didn't intend for my character to be as ludicrous as some of the so called comedy reliefs of the horror films of the '30's. Don intended Frye to be a weak character to offset the intense evil of Longfellow." Stover has had extra parts in Hollywood films such as *The Last Detail*, *Raise The Titanic* and a just completed role in next year's *Diner* as well as feature roles in the last 3 John Waters films. He also had a substantial role in Dohler's *Alien Factor*, playing Steven Price, a doctor.

"I felt more secure with the character of Dennis Frye than I did with the Steven Price role," reveals George. "The Frye character was more clearly defined in my own mind which resulted in a better performance. I even chose Frye's wardrobe and the glasses that hang on the end of his nose was my idea." Stover's estimation of the Frye character is validated by the preview audiences who are easily amused whenever Frye is being subordinated by an angry Longfellow, or being given the of razz by a child being dragged into a music lesson by a forceful parent.

Officiating over the production was Dohler, himself, who wrote the screenplay, edited the film and all its music and soundtracks, and assisted in the eerie score, which was performed by newcomer Paul Woznicki—a talent worth watching. In short, Dohler was at times a "one man-show" during the filming and post-production of *Fiend*. His first professional production, the aforementioned *Alien Factor*, was sold to Gold Key Entertainment for TV syndication and has already been marketed to over 65 U.S. stations and numerous foreign territories.

Don's second feature, *Nightbeast*, was postponed (though existing footage I've viewed is quite remarkable) because of a major disagreement between Dohler's crew and the director, who finally walked off the production. Don relates: "The guy I chose to direct *Nightbeast* just lost control, and the crew got upset with wasted time and resulting bad footage. It's a lesson learned—from here on, I'll direct my own films."

With *Nightbeast* on the back burner, *Fiend* was the next choice, made with a small crew and a tight budget, confirming Don's theory that "It doesn't take 50 people and millions of dollars to make a good independent film." He adds that most of the actors in *Fiend* weren't paid anything, but participated for the fun of it, or for the experience.

Creativity and ingenuity were far more vital than bucks in *Fiend*. Everything was shot within a one-mile radius of Dohler's house (which was actually the Fiend's house in the film)—except the graveyard scenes. This simplistic approach was planned. "I created a story that conformed to my own real-life surroundings, which allowed me to take advantage of the neighborhood, local shopping centers, and the woods down the street," says Dohler.

Elaine White concurs, suggesting that, "Low budget movies can be superior to big budget turkeys like *The Blues Brothers*."

On the technical side of *Fiend*, Dohler's main force consisted of Richard Geiwitz, Director of Photography and Lighting, David W. Renwick, who supplied the optical, animation, and title effects, and Mark Supensky who created much of the make up (although Don Leifert did his own make up in some scenes).

Geiwitz offers some background on the filming. "The nighttime scene in the graveyard was shot on an overcast day using high-speed film, without the daylight conversion filter. This rendered a bluish look to the film. Other than that, we opted to create moody lighting in interiors by careful accent and cross-lighting arrangements. It worked well and the lighting is very consistent throughout the film."

The erratic physical transformations of Eric Longfellow, regressing to a degenerate state until "re-energized" into youth, precipitated sessions by make-up man Mark Supensky that required anywhere

One of the more involved make ups on Don Leifert

from five hours of application for "very advanced stages of decay' to only a minute for brief cutaway shots.

"I was buried under latex and greasepaint for most of the film," recalls Leifert. Much of the discomfort came from having his normally curly brown hair sprayed black along with his eyebrows and moustache. Dohler wanted the hair black to render a more sinister look, and Supensky suggested that a wig would look phony. The alternative, according to Dohler, was to spray Leifert's hair with Nestle's Streaks N' Tips, a hair frosting that comes in several shades. The procedure was to slick Leifert's hair back with Dippity-Doo, spray the coloring, and comb it through evenly. Dohler estimates that Leifert went through this procedure approximately 20 times during the filming.

To give Leifert a death-like quality, Supensky applied an underfayer of cold cream topped with a pale skin tone greasepaint, and a smidgen of shadowing under the eyes. In scenes where Longfellow is deteriorating, a thin coating of latex was applied over the skin, followed by a covering of tissue. This whole arrangement was then "stretched" while wet, and then allowed back into normal position, which created a wrinkled, decaying look to the skin. For the sagging eyes, Supensky applied latex under the eyes, and then pull the lower eyelids down and "glued" them to the latex—a gruesome effect.

It's interesting to note that one actress, Anna Dorhert, played a scene in which she is strangled with a chain by Longfellow. Later that same evening, actor Leifert (out of make-up) saw Miss Dorbert at a nightclub and approached her to say "hi." She thought he was a stranger "on-the make" and was astounded when she realized that the handsome, boyish Leifert was the same person who had earlier portrayed a dark, slimey humanoid who killed her in the scene. That is certainly a testament to the make-up transformation of Leifert.

Fiend was shot with TV in mind, but Dohler has been encouraged by friends to market the film theatrically. He feels, though, that it would be necessary to add gore and at least one nudity scene to "cover" an R-rated obligation.

"The majority of film-goers want violence," stresses Dohler. "Unless you have big names and a megabucks budget, you've got to have a *hook*, which is usually the blood and guts stuff. I saw *Friday The 13th* right after I edited *Fiend*. *Friday* was a set-up for violent shocks—during a rainstorm, a girl plays Monopoly for three hours and then, all of a sudden, decides that she must go close the window in her cabin, which is just a contrivance for her death scene set-up. But don't get me wrong—I admire Sean S. Cunningham. *Friday's* Director, and I'm sure that he'd be the first to admit that his film was a vehicle for shocks. And though it has gore (done by Tom Savini), that gore isn't sustained on screen for more than a few seconds at a time. I call it "tastefully timed" blood & guts, which is what I would do with *Fiend* if the graphic elements were to be added."

Fiend's adherence to story and more sophisticated characters make it a powerful candidate for TV syndication, since it's the perfect sort of film in which a late night watcher could curl up on the sofa and become entranced. But if a theatrical deal, requiring more extensive blood & guts, were offered, would Don Dohler oblige?

"Would I? Well, *Friday The 13th* was made for about $400 thousand and it's grossed—what?—60 million? Sure, if I was asked to add similar violence to *Fiend*, I'd do it—as long as it could be "tastefully timed." ■

POSTSCRIPT: While editing this article, I was invited to a press conference with Robert Altman. The director was frustrated by 20th Century Fox's refusal to distribute *Health*, a cynical satire that was subsequently considered "uncommercial."

"Every one of us is an artist," Altman proclaimed. "We put that capital 'A' on it and make it pretentious." Altman obviously never directed a horror film. If he would have shot some post-production footage of exploding guts or pierced eyes (and changed the title from *Health* to *Blood Feast II*), Altman could have ridden the crest of the most prosperous film of his career.

—Bill George

Above: Anne Frith, who was one of Dohler's key personnel on *Fiend*. Anne not only played a small part, but was an associate producer and location master—she found the eerie country cemetary and gained permission (no easy task) to film in it as often as necessary. Anne also played a large role in *Alien Factor*, and is one of Dohler's biggest supporters.

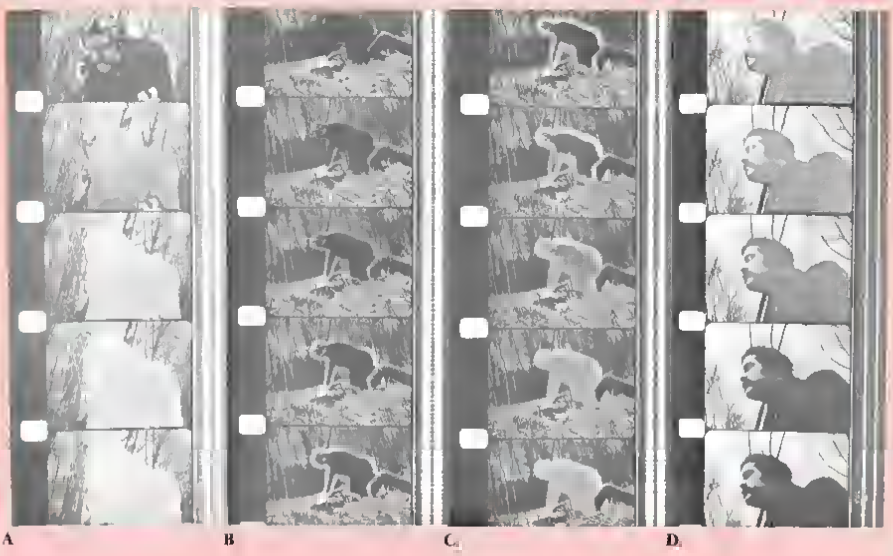
FIEND

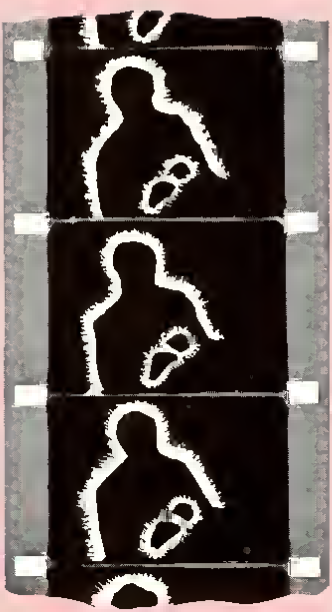
CAST

Eric Longfellow	Don Leifert
Gary Kendor	Richard Nelson
Marsha Kendor	Elaine White
Dennis Frye	George Stover
Scotty	Greg Dohler
Jimmy Barnes	Del Winans
Miss Weiss	Debbie Vogel
Krusty	Kim Dohler
Couple in woods	Barbara Shuman
	Tom Griffith
Angie	Lydia Vuyovech
Steven	Steve Frith
Girl in van	Anna Dorbert
Jane	Pam Dohler
Katie	Anne Frith
Radio announcer	Steve Vertlieb

CREW

Written & Directed by	Don Dohler
Cinematography	Richard Gerwitz
Music	Paul Woomick
Make-up effects	Mark Supensky
Visual effects	David W. Rennick
Assistants Producers	Anne Frith
	Ted Bohlin
	George Stover
Technical Advisors	Chan Sieg
	Harris Dinsmman
Sound engineer	Jim Fox
Print	Quality Film Labs





Above: Actual frame enlargements (made by Tim Stanley) from the composite print show the "glow" cycle created by David W. Renwick. A: An aged Longfellow pulses red as he begins the energy withdrawal from a victim. B: His body is then rimmed by a red glow. C: The rimmed glow intensifies, and his whole body pulses red as the energy is absorbed. D: With the energy transfer complete, the body glow fades to reveal a youthful Longfellow. Renwick hand-painted over 1400 rotoscoped cels to achieve the various glow effects throughout the film. At right: Richard Allison's rendering depicts how the effects were achieved: on the left is the live action footage which Renwick rotoscoped and filmed to obtain the B-roll master at right. In the lab, the B-roll effects were burned into the live action (through a red filter) to get the composite footage.

AMAZING VIDEO

A monthly selection of capsule comments on current video fare by our three resident film buffs Don Leifert Gary Svehla and Bill George—all veteran fans of the science fiction/horror genre The opinions given here are not necessarily those of AMAZING CINEMA If you disagree with one feel free to write and comment

THE RATING SYSTEM

* * * * Great stuff!
* * * Pretty good
* * Could be better
* Yuch!

(Note Most films are available at discount prices from local video stores or write to listed companies for retail prices and catalogues)

ALIEN

116 minutes

Magnetic Video Corp
23434 Industrial Park St
Farmington Hills MI 48024

Bill George (***) The success of the production is somewhat vitiated by its inexpensive progenitor IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE (1958) which has sustained its suspense for nearly a quarter of a century But the dichotomy of its B-film origins (i e cheap shock) merged with Giger s sexual iconography may similarly perpetuate a classic durability and transcend its Jaws In Outer Space artificiality

Gary Svehla (*½):** To my mind the scariest movie ever created and also one of the more imaginative Even though the plot is a reworking of IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE and THE THING director Ridley Scott s keen visual eye and Giger s classic alien-monster elevate the film to new creative heights The premise of depicting the complete life/sexual cycle of an alien creature is fascinating to me I was simply spellbound throughout a visual delight a shocker!

Don Leifert (*) Ponderous movie about an inarticulate crew an alien life form that the audience never really sees and a cat with nine lives The cat wins in this one thin plot constructed entirely around making the audience jump a few times The jumps don t work on the TV screen, so what s left?

Tom Skerritt lowers John Hurt in ALIEN

STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE

130 minutes

Paramount Home Video
5451 Marathon St
Hollywood CA 90038

Bill George (*): Trekkies speculated with grandiloquent expectations that this would be another Sermon on the Mount But even aficionados were squirmin through the sermon cerebrating through situations parasitically reprised from the TV series Climax is psychedelic cloning of All You Need Is Love wrap up from YELLOW SUBMARINE maybe this should have been a musical

Gary Svehla (**) Terribly disappointing considering what could have been created here The warmed-over plot (incorporating various storylines from the old TV series) and over-bearing (bor-ng) special effects cannot compensate for the delightful interplay between the aging original crew members STAR TREK is the perfect example to cite when speaking of 20 million dollar movies that superficially seem much more impressive than they really are What we have here is all surface glitter, even the Trekkies did not go for it!

Don Leifert (***) Mediocre television show is resurrected as a good movie like 2001 STAR TREK suffers on the tube but Kirk, Spock and company do it right in this one Great Jerry Goldsmith score highlights expert special effects good performances by Shatner Nimoy and newcomer Stephen Collins

Ker Dillor is weightless in this scene from 2001 A SPACE ODYSSEY

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

159 minutes

CBS Home Video
1700 Broadway
New York NY 10019

Bill George (No rating) The spectacle and intelligence of 2001 are dependent on one another (while most epics polarize these factions) The tube constricts and even splits this mutually Absorbing Kubrick s film in an uncompatible medium is like listening to a solar eclipse on the radio thus a rating is unqualified in this capacity

Gary Svehla (*½)** A landmark science fiction film combines the spiritual and the mechanical advancing special visual effects to the highest art form defies logical analysis but some[illegible] he e definitely becomes emotionally moving But be forewarned this movie suffers greatly on the small video screen!

Don Leifert (***) A four star movie in a three-star medium Kubrick s brilliant wedding of sight and sound suffers on the small screen

THE FOG

94 minutes

Magnetic Video Corp
23434 Industrial Park St
Farmington Hills MI 48024

Bill George (***). Carpenter s simple ghost story closely parallels Hammer s X-THE UNKNOWN what with a shapeless mass terrorizing a small town rescue of a small child from the appendages of the enigmatic title monster sanctuary provided by an ancient church and even draws some mileage from the car that won t go-into-gear until-the-monster-is THIS close cliche Unpretentious fun nice visuals

Gary Svehla (***) An excellent B horror film but one that definitely pales when compared to John Carpenter s earlier and still superior HALLOWEEN THE FOG combines elements of the classic ghost story with atmospheric scenery moody locations and artistically crafted screen violence Imagine an EC comic book come to life and you have THE FOG

Don Leifert (*½): Tedious yarn involving leperous ghosts who seek revenge against a waterfront community badly acted

A ghostly hand from THE FOG

Reader Survey

This is your chance to help mold the future of AMAZING CINEMA. It's easy—here's all you have to do: merely number your answers (to corresponding questions) on a separate piece of paper and mail it to:

AMAZING CINEMA SURVEY
12 Moray Court
Baltimore, Maryland 21236

You do not have to include your name, but if you do, all information will be kept strictly confidential. We look forward to your participation. Thanks!

1 In which age group do your fall
- a 6-10 years old
- b 11-14 years old
- c 15-17 years old
- d 18-35 years old
- e over 35 years old

2 If you are in school what grade level?

3 If you work what is your job or profession?

4 State the equipment you own
- a Super-8 camera
- b Super 8 Projector (type?)
- c Super 8 Editor
- d 16mm camera
- e 16mm projector (type?)
- f Tape recorder (type?)
- g VHS Video recorder
- h Beta Video recorder
- i Synthesizer (type?)
- j Other _____

5 Name two pieces of equipment you do not own but plan on buying in the future

6 What was your favorite article in this issue of AMAZING CINEMA?

7 What was your least favorite article in this issue of AMAZING CINEMA?

8 What is your favorite regular department (such as Pittaro's Clinic Amazing Video etc.) in AMAZING CINEMA?

9 What is your least favorite department?

10 What types of special effects do you like the most?

11 What are your 5 favorite science fiction films of all time?

12 What are your 5 favorite horror or fantasy films of all time?

13 How often do you go to the movies during the fall and winter?

14 How often do you go to the movies during the spring and summer?

15 What are your 3 favorite film/special effects magazines (in order of preference)?

16 Besides yourself how many other people (friends relatives brothers sisters etc.) read your copies of AMAZING CINEMA?

17 How long have you been
- a Making your own films?
- b A fan of fantastic-type films?

18 Would you like to make filmmaking your career? If yes In what capacity (director special effects etc.)?

19 What types of articles would you like to see in future issues of AMAZING CINEMA (be specific)?

20 What do you think about advertising in magazines like AMAZING CINEMA
- a Like to know about new products available
- b Don't mind a certain amount of advertising
- c Don't like heavy amounts of advertising

Coming in the next issue

AMAZING CINEMA

- **Joe Dante: The Howling**

  An interview with the young director on his hit film and its innovative make-up effects. Includes many exciting scenes from the film. By John Duvoli

- **Bert I. Gordon**

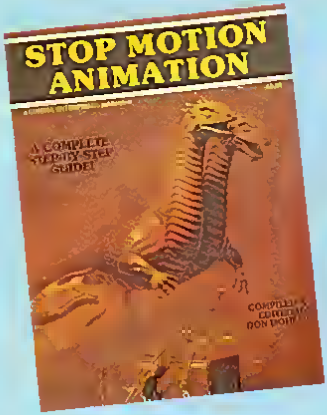
  A candid conversation with the pioneer of "giant" people/animal/bug films; learn about his newest film, *The Coming*, which displays a fresh style & approach to horror filmmaking by Mr. Gordon. By Kevin Danzey

- **The most disgusting "effect" ever conceived!**

  You'll find out what it is in the next issue! By Fred Ray

- **Plus: Classic Film Salute on *Son Of Kong;* Pittaro's Clinic; Amazing Video; and more!**

Do you have the two super books on making special effects?



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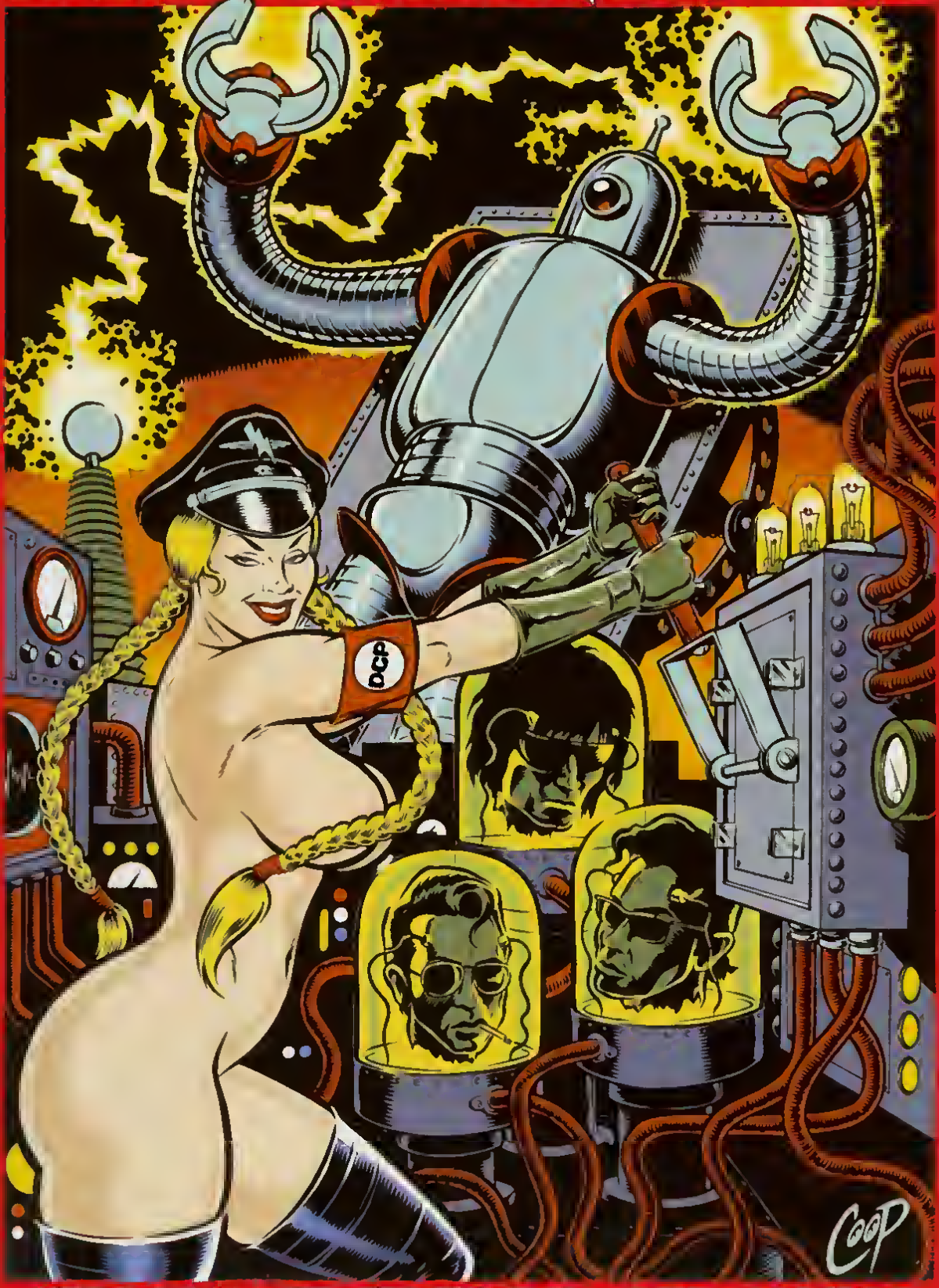

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